who need not be ashamed of comparison with any of the ancients or moderns. For humour (and especially for this humorous attitude towards humour itself) the French are too serious. Is it necessary to add that of all great authors Sterne is the worst model, in fact the inimitable author, and that even Diderot had to pay for his daring ? What the worthy Frenchmen and before them some Greeks and Romans aimed at and attained in prose is the very opposite of what Sterne aims at and attains. He raises himself as a masterly exception above all that artists in writing demand of themselves—propriety, reserve, character, steadfastness of purpose, comprehensiveness, perspicuity, good deportment in gait and feature. Unfortunately Sterne the man seems to have been only too closely related to Sterne the writer. His squirrel-soul sprang with insatiable unrest from branch to branch ; he knew what lies between sublimity and rascality; he had sat on every seat, always with unabashed watery eyes and mobile play of feature. He was—if language does not revolt from such a combination—of a hard-hearted kindness, and in the midst of the joys of a grotesque and even corrupt imagination he showed the bashful grace of innocence. Such a carnal and spiritual hermaphro-ditism, such untrammelled wit penetrating into every vein and muscle, was perhaps never possessed by any other man.

114.

A CHOICE REALITY.—Just as the good prose writer only takes words that belong to the language of daily intercourse, though not by a long way all